

Introduction to Isaiah 40:12ff

Isa 40:12-17 <sup>12</sup> *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?* <sup>13</sup> *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has taught Him?* <sup>14</sup> *With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?* <sup>15</sup> *Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.* <sup>16</sup> *And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.* <sup>17</sup> *All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.*

Thus far our Lord has been presented to us as a God of love and tenderness. The Good Shepherd who provides salvation, comfort and hope to His elect. Some may think that there is a break here in the instruction and would be tempted to say that there is no apparent connection between the verses that now follow. But a careful observation will show us that Isaiah now wants us to know that God as provider of salvation, hope and comfort is more than able to keep us in the midst of a world that hates us. For in the next several verses God is revealed as one who is most powerful and most wise. It is important that we see God, not only as one who makes promises to His elect but we must see Him as one who is more than able to fulfill all that He has promised.

In this next section of Isaiah we shall see a God of might, power and wisdom. A God, who created, rules and sustains the whole of His creation. We need to understand that the purpose of God in his passage is to encourage us in our faith with a confidence that He who promised is able to fulfill all that he has promised. As the Apostle Paul reminds us that Abraham did not hesitate to believe all that God had promised as we read in Romans 4:20-21 *"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."* In all of Paul's trials and conflicts he writes to Timothy, *"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.* (2 Tim 1:12)

Therefore it is imperative that we understand that in all reality the subject matter has not changed. I mean by that that this passage continues to be about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I say it is most important because what we shall learn about our Savior from this passage will strengthen our faith and confidence in our God's ability to redeem us from all the power of the Devil? This morning's message is but an introduction to the rest of the chapter. God's people can expect trials in their life. God's people need to place their trust in God alone, and need to be reminded that they can place their trust in God alone.

- A. As God's elect we can expect trials in our life because God often permits His church to undergo trials.
1. Israel was soon to be taken into captivity; this was written to be an encouragement to them.
    - a. Although it was a judgment against those who were unfaithful, God's elect suffered during that time also
    - b. But God comforts them by revealing that they would be kept by the power of God amongst a pagan world.
  2. In our day as Christians we may well know conflict and fierce trials in this present world.
    - a. We can expect to be hated by the world.

*Luke 21:17-18 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake*

*Rom 8:36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

*John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation;*

*2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

- b. For the church in USA the opposition today is somewhat light
- c. But that may be even a greater danger.

d. For it is evident that the church can be affected if it has a wrong view of the world about it.

- (1) Too often the church wants to be accepted by the world
- (2) Thus too often the visible church will try to conform to worldly standards

3. We also need to be aware that Satan is a real being, and that he is alive and well

a. He was active in Jesus day.

*John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him*

b. He continues to desire to destroy God's witness before the world.

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

c. We are engaged in a real battle far above our abilities.

*Eph 6:11-12 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

d. Even the very arch-angels of heaven are aware of Satan's power.

*Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*

e. Or like Peter we may be tempted to put trust in the flesh.

*Matt 26:33-35 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, **I will never be made to stumble.**" Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "**Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!**" **And so said all the disciples.***

B. Therefore these things are written to encourage us because we need to know that our Savior is a God of infinite power

1. Our trust must be raised above the world about us.

- a. Because of our weakness our deliverance may seem to be beyond belief.
- b. But we shall learn that our God is above the whole of creation.
- c. Our trust in not to be things temporal.

2. Because of the weakness of our flesh we are prone by nature to doubt our God.

- a. When trials fall our way we are tempted to think that the Lord has forsaken and overlooked us.
- b. Thus we need to be reminded that our God watches over us and is able to deliver us.

*Heb 13:5-6 For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

Conclusion: Therefore in the weakness of our flesh let us say

*1 Peter 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*